INTENSIVE CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY OF THE HILLTOP PHASE I 23.02-ACRE PROJECT BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS

Prepared for

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ABSTRACT

On behalf of Intco-Dominion Partnership, SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) conducted an intensive cultural resources survey of the 23.02-acre Hilltop Phase I project area in Bexar County, Texas. Work was done to satisfy requirements of the San Antonio Historic Preservation Office (HPO) per the City of San Antonio's Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-360 to 35-634). The project area is in northern San Antonio, located east of Interstate Highway (IH) 10 and north of Loop 1604 within the Dominion Residential area.

The investigations included a background literature and records review and an intensive pedestrian survey with subsurface investigations. Overall, the survey revealed the project area to be a rocky upland setting with prevalent limestone bedrock outcroppings. The survey included 11 shovel tests placed in areas that had the highest potential for containing buried cultural materials with good integrity. No cultural materials were identified within any of the shovel test excavations and no resources were observed on the surface of the project area. Two structures and three structural features associated with a residence dating to the 1940s were encountered during the survey. However, the main residence has been partially demolished, compromising the integrity required to be potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The additional features and structure are commonplace and do not contribute any significance to the residential complex. Associated artifacts in the vicinity of the complex are middle to late 20th century in age. Based on these results, no significant cultural resources will be affected by any construction activities within the project area. SWCA recommends no further archaeological investigations within the project area.

No artifacts were collected; therefore, nothing was curated.

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

PROJECT TITLE: Intensive Cultural Resources Survey of the Hilltop Phase I 23.02-Acre Project, Bexar County, Texas

SWCA PROJECT NUMBER: 14390-224

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: On behalf of Intco-Dominion, SWCA conducted an intensive cultural resource investigation of the 23.02-acre Hilltop Phase I project area. The 23.02-acre project area is scheduled for residential development. These investigations included a background review and a pedestrian survey with subsurface investigations.

LOCATION: The project area is in northern San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas, roughly 3.25 miles due north of the Loop 1604 and east of IH 10 intersection. The property is 23.02 acres in size. The project area is shown on the Camp Bullis USGS topographic quadrangles.

NUMBER OF ACRES SURVEYED: 23.02

DATES OF WORK: May 6, 2008

PURPOSE OF WORK: Work was done to satisfy requirements of the San Antonio Historic Preservation Office (HPO) per the City of San Antonio's Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-360 to 35-634).

NUMBER OF SITES: None.

CURATION: No artifacts were collected during the fieldwork investigations; thus, nothing was curated.

COMMENTS: The project area is almost exclusively a rocky bedrock outcrop with minor areas of shallow, rocky, silty clay loam soils. The survey did encounter a residence with outbuildings and scattered middle to late twentieth century debris. The residence and several of the features date to the 1940s, but lack a level of integrity required to be considered significant or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Associated artifacts are from the middle to late 20th century. Accordingly, no significant cultural resources will be affected by any construction activities within the project area. No additional archaeological investigations are recommended for the project area.

INTRODUCTION

On behalf of Intco Dominion Partnership (Dominion), SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) conducted an intensive cultural resources survey of the 23.02-acre Hilltop Phase I project area in northern Bexar County, Texas. Work was done to satisfy requirements of the San Antonio Historic Preservation Office (HPO) per the City of San Antonio's Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-360 to 35-634). These investigations included a background review and a pedestrian survey with subsurface investigations.

SWCA archaeologists John Lowe and Josh Haefner conducted the fieldwork on May 6, 2008.

DEFINITION OF STUDY AREA

The proposed 23.02-acre project area is located 3.25 miles north of Loop 1604 and about 0.8 miles east of Interstate Highway (IH) 10 in northern San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas (Figure 1). The project area is an undeveloped portion within the large Dominion residential development. The boundaries are open on all sides except the west, where a fence along a previously developed area forms the edge.

Although the depths of impacts for the project construction have not been indicated, current construction observed near the property is over three feet in depth. The project area is situated in an upland setting positioned along the slopes overlooking small tributary drainages of Leon Creek located about 0.5 miles to the southwest (Figure 1). The overwhelming majority of the project area occupies rocky limestone upland terrain with soils of little vertical depth and broad areas of exposed bedrock (Figure 2). The project area contains thick vegetation with an overstory of a few oaks and cedar, and a dominant understory of juniper and various shrubs (Figure 3). At the time of the survey, ground visibility within the project area ranged from a low of 35 percent to a high of 100 percent, but the visibility was typically about 70 percent.

The geology of the project area is exclusively mapped as Lower Cretaceous-period Upper Glen Rose Formation limestone divided (Barnes 1983). This formation is composed of thinly bedded limestone with dolomite, and marl with differing rates of resistance forming a stairstep topography. The Upper Glen Rose Formation is roughly 400 feet thick.

The soils of the project area are mapped as Bracket-Tarrant association, hilly. Specifically, the Bracket-Tarrant association (8–30 percent slopes) is described as shallow to very shallow soils over limestone. These thin soils are subject to runoff and water erosion if not covered with adequate vegetation (Taylor et al. 1991).

METHODS

BACKGROUND REVIEW

SWCA conducted a thorough background cultural resources and environmental literature search of the project area. An SWCA archaeologist reviewed the Camp Bullis, Texas, USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) and searched the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Texas Archeological Sites Atlas (Atlas) online database for any previously recorded surveys and historic or prehistoric archaeological sites located in or near the project area. In addition to identifying recorded archaeological sites, the review included information on the following types of cultural resources: National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) properties, State Archeological Landmarks (SALs), Official Texas Historical Markers, Registered Texas

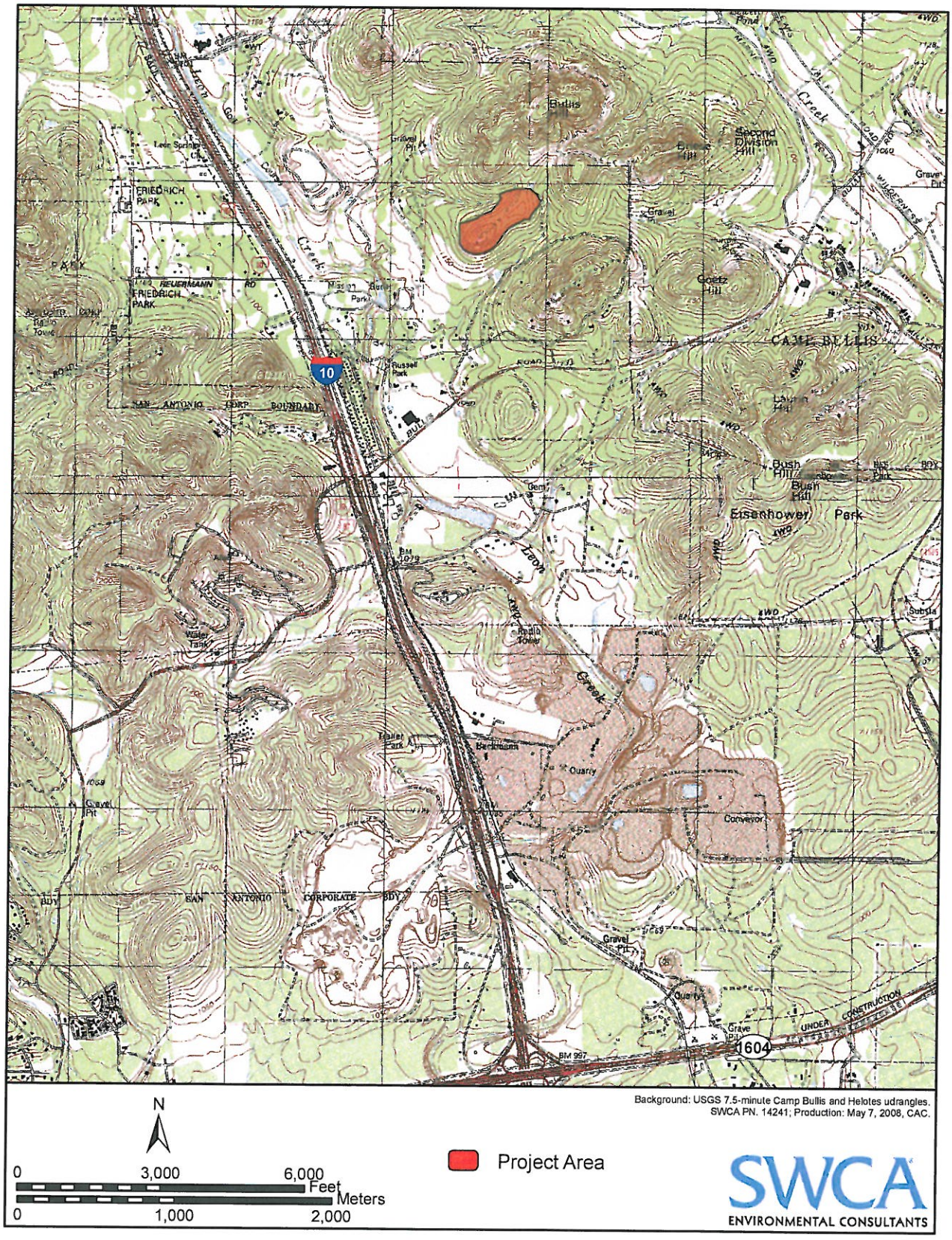

Figure 1. Project location map.

Figure 2: Overview of upland terrain with exposed stepped bedrock, facing south.

Figure 3: Typical vegetation in the project area, facing southeast.

Historic Landmarks (RTHLs), cemeteries, and local neighborhood surveys. The archaeologist also examined the *Soil Survey of Bexar County, Texas* (Taylor et al. 1991) and the *Geologic Atlas of Texas, San Antonio Sheet* (Barnes 1983). Aerial photographs were reviewed to assist in identifying any disturbances.

Field Methods

SWCA's investigations consisted of an intensive pedestrian survey with subsurface investigations within the project area.

Archaeologists examined the ground surface and extensive erosional profiles and exposures for cultural resources. Subsurface investigations involved shovel testing in settings with the potential to contain buried cultural materials. The shovel tests were approximately 30 cm in diameter and excavated to culturally sterile deposits or impassible limestone, whichever came first. The matrix from each shovel test was screened through ¼-inch mesh, and the location of each excavation was plotted using a hand-held GPS receiver. Each shovel test was recorded on a standardized form to document the excavations.

Results

Background Review

The background review determined that an area immediately to the north of the project area was previously surveyed. In addition, some areas situated to the east of the project area associated with Camp Bullis have been previously surveyed. Although the project area has not been surveyed, it was incorporated in a synthesis that reviewed the cultural properties of the area. Also, several archaeological sites encountered during the previous surveys are located within a mile of the project area. Specifically, there are twelve archaeological sites (41BX402, 41BX403, 41BX807, 41BX808, 41BX809, 41BX810, 41BX825, 41BX826, 41BX923, 41BX924, 41BX1015 and 41BX1640) located within one mile east of the Hilltop Phase I project area.

In April of 2008, SWCA surveyed 37 acres of the Brenthurst Phase I project for Intco-Dominion Partnerships. The southern section of this survey was located immediately to the north of the current project area. No cultural meterials were encountered in the southern section. The northern section was located approximately 500 meters northwest of the current project area. A concentration of historic debris, consisting of roughly 40 beer cans dating from 1935-1955, was noted, as were two isolated historic cans, but none were designated as a formal archaeological site. No further work was recommended for this survey area (Lawrence 2008).

There have been at least three surveys conducted within Camp Bullis that are situated within a mile of the project area. One survey was conducted in the late 1970s during the Fort Sam Houston Project for the Fort Worth District of the Army Corps of Engineers (COE-FWD). This project included an archaeological and historical assessment as well as a survey of portions of Camp Bullis. Sites 41BX402 and 41BX403 were recorded during this survey.

In the late 1980s, Prewitt and Associates conducted multiple surveys of portions within Camp Bullis for the COE-FWD. These surveys documented, among others, sites 41BX807, 41BX808, 41BX809, 41BX810, 41BX825, 41BX826, 41BX923, and 41BX924.

None of these previously conducted surveys overlap the proposed project area. Each of the archaeological sites encountered during these surveys within a mile of the project area are

situated in a rocky upland setting. All of these sites that are discussed in detail below overlook the Salado Creek drainage, which is situated to the east.

Sites 41BX402 and 41BX403 consist of exclusively surficial prehistoric lithic scatters with some scattered burned rock. Site 41BX402 did not contain temporally diagnostic artifacts while 41BX403 is recorded as having Travis, Bulverde, Pedernales, Angostura, and Gower projectile points. No further archaeological work was recommended for either of these sites (Atlas Site forms).

Similarly, sites 41BX807, 41BX808, 41BX809, 41BX810, 41BX923, 41BX924 and 41BX1640 are recorded as prehistoric surficial lithic scatters. All of these sites are indicated to have diffusely scattered lithic debitage, bifacial tool fragments, and some scattered thermally altered rock fragments. Only sites 41BX807 and 41BX1640 are recorded as containing projectile points. Site 41BX807 yielded non-specific dart points; therefore, this site has been interpreted to have an Archaic temporal setting. Site 41BX1640 contained a single Edgewood dart point, which dates to the Late Archaic time period. The remaining sites are indeterminate regarding temporal affiliation. No further archaeological work was recommended for all seven of these sites (Atlas Site forms).

Two sites, 41BX825 and 41BX826, are identified as historic structures. Site 41BX825 consists of a stone, concrete, brick and metal structure that was used as a trash incinerator, along with an associated trash scatter. Maps and construction features suggest that the incinerator dates to the World War II era. The recorders indicate that site 41BX826 is composed of a concrete structure used for military purposes. Specifically, the structure is interpreted to have been used as an observation area for military exercises (grenade practice) during World War I and may possibly date to the initial construction of Camp Bullis (Atlas Site forms) Both sites were recommended for further investigation in order to determine the actual nature and function of the structures.

The final previously recorded site, 41BX1015, is an early 20th century trash scatter strewn throughout a minor erosional drainage. The recorders noted that the dump likely contained multiple episodes of use, but that the size of the scatter was exaggerated by washing within the drainage channel. No further work was recommended for this site (Atlas Site form).

None of these previously sites will be affected by the proposed activities of the Hilltop Phase I project.

FIELD SURVEY

On May 6, 2008, two SWCA archaeologists conducted an intensive pedestrian survey of the 23.02-acre Hilltop Phase I project area. Overall, the project exhibited prevalent rocky uplands and some significant modifications. Some of these disturbances include: a residence and associated outbuildings, overhead utilities, existing paved roadways (Figure 4), refuse disposal, and vegetation clearing. The project area is a mix of thick vegetation with an overstory of scattered oaks and cedar and extensively cleared areas with only shrubs and short grasses (see Figures 2 and 3).

The subsurface investigations of the project area consisted of 11 shovel tests (Figure 5). The depths of these shovel tests ranged from 5–15 centimeters below surface (cmbs); however, most of them encountered degrading limestone bedrock between 5-8 cmbs (Table 1). Overall, the shovel tests averaged 8 centimeters in depth and generally encountered a thin surface of humate material above a horizon of silty clay loam with abundant limestone

Figure 4: Paved road or driveway in project area, facing southwest. Note rise in background.

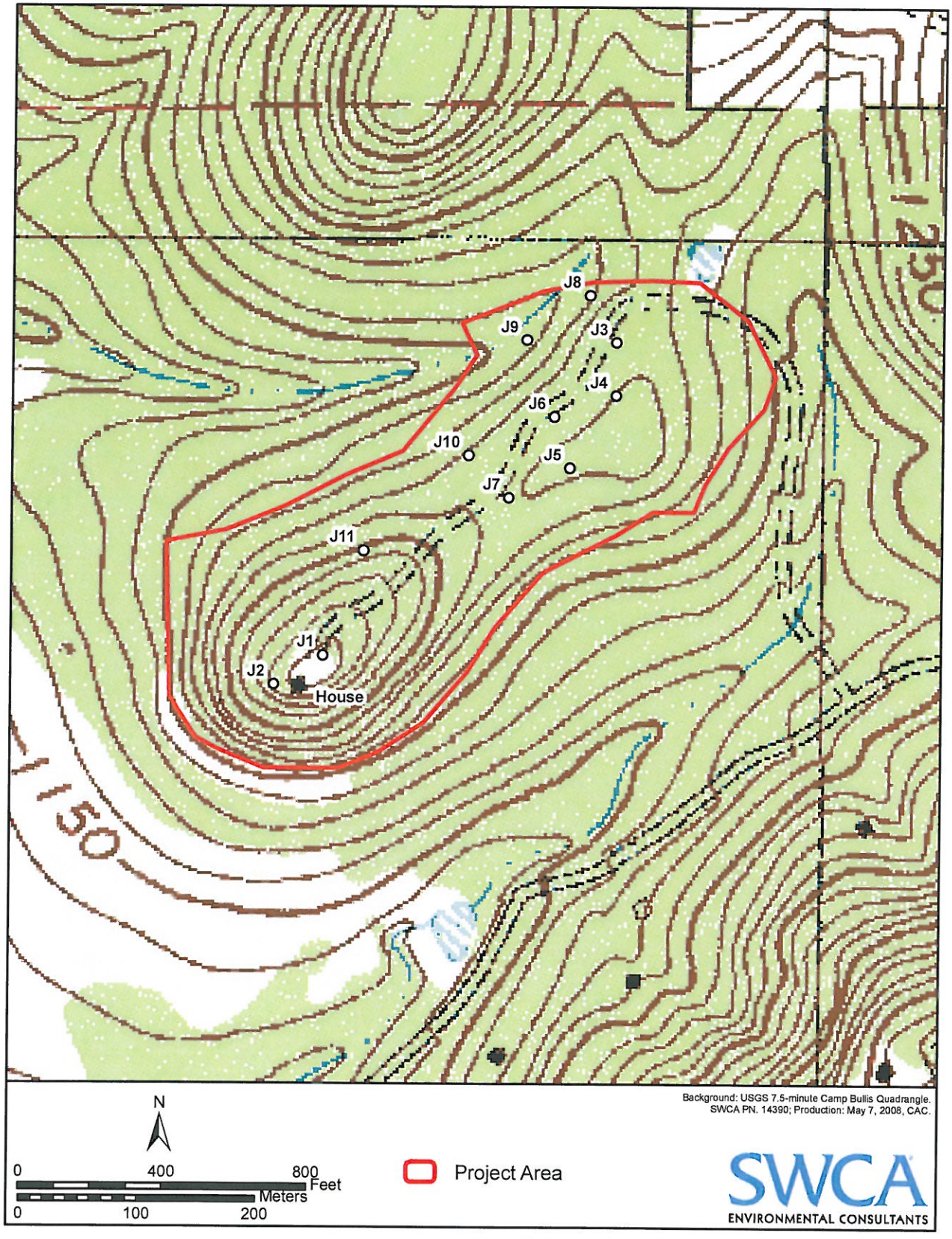

Figure 5. Shovel test location map.

Table 1. Shovel Test Data

ST	Depth (cmbs)	Soil Color (Munsell)	Sediment Texture	Artifacts Recovered	Comments
J1	0-6	10YR5/4	Silty Loam	None	Within grassy area, next to tree. Two meters east of paved road, near house. Terminated at bedrock.
J2	0-5	10YR4/4	Clay loam	None	Western edge of APE. On a slope, exposed limestone gravels and boulders. Dense juniper and understory. Terminated at bedrock.
J3	0-8	10YR4/4	Silty Loam	None	In wooded area. Broken up bedrock at 4 cm below surface. Terminated at bedrock.
J4	0-5	10YR3/2	Silty Clay Loam	None	Level area, in a clearing in juniper woods. Extensive surface limestone gravels and cobbles. Terminated at bedrock.
J5	0-10	10YR4/3	Loam	None	Terminated at bedrock.
J6	0-10	10YR3/2	Silty Clay Loam	None	Mixed oak and juniper woods, level area SE of road. Surface limestone slabs. Small limestone chunks and snail shells in soil. Terminated at bedrock.
J7	0-10	10YR3/2	Silty Loam	None	Soil is very humic. In wooded area with extensive leaf litter. Crushed bedrock at 8 cm. Terminated at bedrock.
J8	0–10	10YR3/2	Silty Clay Loam	None	Terminated at bedrock.
J9	0-10	10YR4/3	Silty Clay Loam	None	Dry soil with crushed limestone inclusion. In wooded area.
	10-15	10YR3/2	Clay Loam	None	More clayey. Terminated at bedrock.
J10	0–5	10YR3/2	Silty Loam	None	Terminated at bedrock.
J11	0-5	10YR3/2	Silty Loam	None	Behind house, near two-track. Terminated at bedrock.

gravels and small cobbles overlying degrading limestone bedrock (Figure 6).

Additional shovel tests were deemed unnecessary due to the widespread bedrock exposures, steep slopes, and scattered disturbances (Figures 7 and 8).

No cultural materials were encountered in any of the 11 shovel tests. Further, no chert debris, sources, or outcrops were seen interbedded within the limestone formations encountered in the project area. The absence of chert raw materials is notable considering the prevalence of previously recorded prehistoric quarry sites in proximity to the project area. Specifically, the overwhelming majority of the previously recorded sites are located about a mile east of the project area situated along the Salado Creek drainage valley This inconsistency may be attributed to a different geologic exposure than what is present at the project area. Regardless, no chert debris or chert source locations were apparent within the proposed project area.

The survey did encounter several isolated non-historic artifacts diffusely scattered throughout the project area, mixed in with recent refuse. These artifacts consisted of metal beer and food cans. Trash was more abundant in the vicinity of the residence and along the paved driveway.

The residence (Figure 9) is located at the top of a hill, at the end of the paved driveway. It is depicted on the Camp Bullis topographic quad map (Figure 5), and is shown in the same location on the 1953 Camp Bullis topographic quad map. The front wall of the house and much of the interior has been gutted, and the roof has been removed (Figure 10). SWCA Historic Archaeologist Mindy Bonine dates the building construction to the early 1940s, based on the steel frame windows, floor foundation planking and the materials used. She notes, however, that some of the windows have been replaced, the toilet and shower tile is modern, and modern plumbing and air conditioning had been installed.

The residence is of recent historic age, dating to roughly 1941. However, one of the primary considerations in evaluating a building for National Register of Historic Properties significance is integrity. According to National Register Bulletin 15 (1991: 44), the seven aspects of integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Based on our assessment, the only aspect of integrity that the property retains is location, in that the structure is still situated where it was originally built. The current state of the building has compromised any other aspects of its integrity. Therefore, the building is not considered significant and is not considered eligible for the NRHP.

Several features related to the residential complex are also present in the project area. An outbuilding serving as a utility room (Figure 11) is located behind the house, to the north. The steel frame window and concrete floor, as well as similar construction materials, date it as contemporaneous with the house. Inside the building was a late 20th century model washing machine and two pennies, dating to 1999 and 2000. There is no roof on the building. The outbuilding is unremarkable and would only be a contributing element to the overall eligibility of the residential complex.

Directly behind the utility room is a collapsed pole-frame structure with a concrete foundation (Figure 12). The function and date of the original structure is unknown. To the northwest of the house, west of the utility room, is a concrete pad foundation (Figure 13). This may have been the location of a water cistern, as two modern metal cisterns were dumped next to the utility room. Neither of these features is

Figure 6: Shovel test J6, with representative shallow soils over bedrock, facing northwest. Ruler is 15 centimeters.

Figure 7: Representative view of slopes throughout project area, facing east/uphill.

Figure 8: Disturbances from paved and two-track roads and associated clearing, facing west

Figure 9: Standing walls and debris associated with former residence in project area, facing west-southwest. Note original windows to left and modern window to right.

Figure 10: Interior of residence from front porch, facing northwest. Note floor foundation planking, PVC pipe to right, and modern toilet in rear.

Figure 11: Outbuilding utility room, facing north-northwest. Note concrete floor, and original window in background.

Figure 12: Collapsed pole shed remains behind outbuilding, facing south.

Figure 13: Concrete pad behind house, facing west-northwest.

intact, thus they do not contribute to the overall assessment of the complex.

The final feature associated with the residence is a stone wall around the perimeter of the complex (Figure 14). The wall is constructed of limestone blocks and concrete mortar, and is presumed to be contemporaneous with the residence. In some areas, the wall has been damaged, but a majority is intact. However, the wall is a common type and would only be a contributing element to the overall eligibility of the residential complex.

Two shovel tests were excavated in the vicinity of the residential complex, including one by the driveway to the east of the house. Both shovel tests were negative for cultural materials and encountered extremely shallow bedrock (Table 1). The refuse and building debris by the house was visually assessed and determined to be from the late 20th century. Therefore, the complex is not considered to be an archaeological site. No further work is recommended for any portion of the residential complex. Additionally, no further work is recommended for the remainder of the project area.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SWCA conducted a cultural resources investigation of the 23.02-acre Hilltop Phase I project area in northern Bexar County, Texas. Work was done to satisfy requirements of the HPO per the City of San Antonio's Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-360 to 35-634).

The background review revealed that an area immediately to the north of the project area had been previously surveyed for the Intco-Dominion partnership. Additionally, some areas east of the project area associated with Camp Bullis have been previously surveyed. Although the project area has not been surveyed, it was incorporated in a synthesis that reviewed the cultural properties of the area. Also, of the archaeological sites encountered during the previous surveys, 13 of them are located within a mile of the project area. These sites are located roughly one mile east of the Hilltop Phase I project area. All of these sites are situated in a rocky upland overlooking the Salado Creek drainage to the east.

Overall, the project area is almost exclusively a rocky upland setting with prevalent limestone bedrock outcroppings and minor areas of shallow rocky clay loam soils. In addition to the widespread bedrock exposures the project area has some disturbances consisting of cleared paved and two-track roads, tree throws, hunting, water run-off, and fence lines. The survey included 11 shovel tests placed in areas that had the highest potential for containing buried cultural materials with good integrity. No cultural materials were identified within any of the shovel test excavations. The remains of a 1940s residence and several associated structural features were documented within the project area. The integrity of the residence has been compromised by demolition, and the associated features are commonplace. Therefore, the complex is not eligible for listing on the NRHP. Furthermore, the complex is not an archaeological site, due to several negative shovel tests and the modern age of the surface debris. Accordingly, no intact significant cultural resources will be affected by any construction activities within the project area. SWCA recommends no further archaeological investigations within the project area.

Figure 14: Mortared stone wall surrounding house area, facing west-southwest.

REFERENCES

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